

An Exhortation to all People.

Reader, be serious, and mind these following things, and then I believe thou wilt judge charitably of them.

The true Church is in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the pillar & ground of Truth, 1 Thes. 1. 1. 2 Thes. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 15. But the most high dwelleth not in Temples made with hands, 1 Cor. 3. 16. The Saints Bodies, they are the temple of God, and he dwells and walks in his own Temple, 1 Cor. 3. 16. and 6. 19. And what house will ye build unto me saith the Lord? will I be my Throne, and Earth my Footstool? Act. 7. 43, 50. And the true everlasting High Priest rules in us, Christ Jesus, (the Saints Teacher) who was not made after the Law, of a Carnal Commandment, but after the power of an endless Life, and so remains a Priest forever, Heb. 7. 24. &c. And Christ said, Come unto me, and learn of me, Mat. 11. 28, 29, 30. The true Baptism is inward in the Spirit, for as many of you as have been Baptized into Christ, are put on Christ, Gall. 3. 27, 28, 29. And there is one Body, one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all, Ephes. 4. 4, 5, 6. And by one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body, 1 Cor. 12. 13. And the true communion is inward in the Spirit, and Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of Life, and except ye eat my Flesh, and drink my Blood, ye shall not have Life in you, Joh. 6. from 48. to 59. And the true worship of Christ is in the Spirit within his People, for he said, they that worship God, must worship him in Spirit and Truth, read his Conference with the Woman of Samaria, Joh. Chap. 4. and Joh. Chap. 8.

Now upon the whole matter, I do say and affirm, that Christ dwells in his People, and that he was and is the Saints Teacher, and he is the true Teacher, so he will continue to be the last. And whosoever set up Hireling Teachers, and follow them, and deny Christs teachings in their own Bosoms; such Teach-

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ers are the False Teachers, which *Jude* the Servant of the Lord in his general Epistle testified against. And such are they now, & of the same Nature and Generation with the Scribes and Pharisees, which Christ Jesus pronounced so many Woes against, as in *Mat. 23.* let that be minded, for they are seen with the Light of Jesus, which manifests all things, of what sort it is.

And let the Hireling Priests of these times, Professors or Prophane, such as have charged us (who in scorn are called *Quakers*) to be *Denyers of the Scriptures*; let sober People judge whether they or we be the denyers of the Scriptures, in Life, Practice and Conversation, let them be denied & turned from, provided the Scriptures without wresting may be judge therein; for to the Spirit of God and them, we shall appeal, that what we hold, profess and practice, they shall justify us therein, rightly understood spiritually, and lay aside your outward Laws, and carnal Weapons; and let Gods Divine Royal Law, and Spiritual Weapons, decide this great Controversie in these things that concern Eternal Salvation and Damnation. *For all the Children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and in Righteousness as they are established,* as in *Isa. 54. 13, 14.* *Jer. 31. 33, 34.* thus it is written in the Prophets; *And they shall be all taught of God, every Man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me, saith Christ, Joh. 6. 45.* And the Grace of God which brings Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, and this Grace of God teacheth the Saints to deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lust, and to live soberly and righteously in this present Evil World. And all who turn from this Grace, they turn into Wantonness, and so deny the Lord that bought them.

And as the Apostle writ in his Epistle to the *Romans*, *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it to them,* *Rom. 1. 19.* so that it is clear and evident by the Scriptures of Truth, that the true Teacher Christ is within People, and cannot be removed into a Corner, nor does no more. And this is the Judgment and Doctrine of all Christs Faithful Ministers,



Ministers, who are called, chosen, and sent of him, as the Apostles and Disciples were.

And therefore the Lords chosen People can say, away with all covetous Hireling Teachers, for they are useless, and let them learn to labour with their hands, as the Apostles did, and as the true Ministers of Christ now do, and so let the Gospel of Christ Jesus be free, and not chargeable to any people.

Some things offered to the Consideration of all you who are call'd Magistrates and Rulers over the People, and to all your under Officers, and your Hireling Teachers of all sorts, who pretend the Scripture to be your Rule, who with your outward Laws, do Force and Compel many such as absent from you in your Worship, to joyn with you therein; which thing never was the practice of the Lord's People in any Age, recorded in the Scriptures of Truth, and is out of the Order and Rule of the Scriptures.

AND your Church (as you call it) was it not the *Papists* **Old Masse-house**? and by them builded when they were in power? Is it not so filled, and the Assembly therein with People that live in Pride, Pleasures, Persecution, Drunkenness, Lying and Swearing, and such like Sins? and that you still say you are Miserable Sinners, erring and going astray like lost Sheep, and doing that you should not do, and leaving that undone which you should do, is not this your weekly Confession, daily Practice? let God's true Witness in all sober People answer; and if so (then for my part) I dare not joyn with you therein, nor be a Member of that Church, whatever I suffer for it.

And I am apt to believe, that you may make Hypocrites to come & joyn with you, by your forcing Laws, but take heed they be not such, as if they had opportunity and power, would turn against you and destroy: has there not been some appearances thereof both in former and latter Years? But those whom the Lord hath redeemed and brought into his Spiritual Worship, cannot bow to any Likeness, Image, or outward Form of Worship,

ship, where the Power and Presence of God is wanting; for it was the Apostles Exhortation to turn away from such as had a Form of Godliness, but denied the Power thereof: Neither can the Redeemed of the Lord conform to your way of Worship; for the same Apostle saith to those he writ to, *But be not ye conformed to the World, but transformed, by the renewing of your Mind, &c.* as in Rom. 12. 2. *Neither can we fashion our selves according to the course of this World, which passeth away, 1 Cor. 7. 31. And our Kingdom is not of this World, even as our Lord and Masters was not of this World; for we seek another Kingdom, Eternal in the Heavens; whose Maker, Builder and Upholder is God, 1 Theff. 1. 1.* And all that we desire from you who are in Authority, that you would let the Spirit of God and the Scriptures be your rule in all your actions, & if we digress from the same upon an equal tryal, then let the Transgressors suffer according to Law; *For the Law was added because of Transgression, & is not to be laid upon a righteous Man; but unto the Lawless and Disobedient, to the Ungodly and Sinners, &c.* as in the 1 Tim. 1. 9, 10. *And the Law of God is Just, Holy and Good, as was in the beginning, which is to fear and serve God above all things, and to walk humbly before him, to deal Justly and to love Mercy, to do to others as we would be done unto.* And here is the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel of Jesus answered, which was in the beginning, and which will never come to an end: And whosoever goes from this Law of the Spirit, goes out of the order and rule of the Scriptures.

Neither is our warfare and Weapons Carnal, or destructive to the Bodies of any; but Spiritual and Mighty, to the pulling down the Man of Sin, the grand Enemy of the Soul, for we desire not to contend with Flesh and Blood; but for the Faith which once was and now is delivered to the Saints. This is our Warfare, and therefore ye ought in right reason, and by the rule of the Scriptures, to let us live peaceably by you, and not to turn your Swords against us; for the Magistrates Sword was and ought to be for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well, and in so doing then you are in the place

place of true Justice, and so in the order and rule of the Spirit of God and the Scriptures, which all People upon the face of the whole Earth is out of, which does that to others, which they would not have others do unto them; for whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do you so unto them; this is the order and rule of the Spirit of God and the Scriptures; and when these things come to be minded and practised, and then will Persecution about Religion cease and come to an end, and all Persecuting Laws will be laid aside, and Righteousness will run down the Streets, like a mighty stream, and the knowledge of God will cover the Earth, as the Waters cover the Seas; this is that the Righteous pray for, wait for, and live in hopes (in Gods time) to see the same fulfilled.

And now a little to examin (comparativly) of the dwellings of Gods Enemies in former Ages, and in this our Age, against the Lords People and Servants; whereby the moderate Reader, may come to have an insight and understanding by this present Relation.

Was it not the High Priest, the Chief Priest, and the Captain of the Temple with his Officers, that rose up against the Apostles, and Imprisoned them; saying, *Did not we straitly command you, that you should not teach in this Name?* (viz. Christ) read *Act. 5. 17.* and take counsel at the good Man *Gamaliel* therein mentioned, then it may tend to your good.

And may it not truly be said, that the Chief Priest and Rulers, and the baser sort of Men, were the greatest Persecutors in the days of Christ and his Apostles? let the Scriptures and Gods faithful Witness in all sober Men answer.

And was it not the Chief Priest and Rulers that set *Saul* forward in his Persecution, till the Lord struck him down, that he fell to the Earth; and after his Conversion, when he came to preach Christ Jesus, then the learned Jews took counsel to kill him, but the Lord so ordered it, that they were disappointed thereof, and he delivered *Paul*, *Act. 9.*

And how did the Persecuting Jews when they saw *Paul* in the Temple,

Temple, stir up all the People and laid hands on him, crying out,
Men of Israel Help, &c. Act. 21. 27. &c.

And is not this Persecuting Spirit at work in this our Age? Yes, for it is one and the same through all Generations, *For as it was then, so it is now, he that is born after the Flesh, persecutes him that is born after the Spirit*, these are the two Births as in the first of Joh. 12, 13, 14. verses.

And in *Acts 23.* when *Paul* began to plead his own cause, you may read how the High Priest *Ananias* commanded them that stood by him, to smite him on the Face; and have not many Faithful Friends had the like usage from the Priests in this Age. In which Chap. you may read how the Jews had banded together and bound themselves under a Curse, saying, *They would neither Eat nor Drink till they had killed Paul.* But you may read how the Lord prevented these Bloody Persecutors, and delivered him.

And in *Act. 24.* you may read how that *Ananias* the High Priest, descended with the Elders and others, who informed the Governour against *Paul*, *How they had found him a pestilent Fellow, a mover of Sedition among all the Jews, throughout the World.* Read the Chap. throughout, there you have his Examination before the Chief Captain *Lyfias*, & how he was sent to *Felix* the Governour, who for doing the Jews a pleasure left *Paul* Bound.

And in Chap. 25. you may read how the High Priest, and the Chief of the Jews, informed *Festus* against *Paul*, and how they laid in wait to kill him; but there was so much Nobility and Charity in *Festus*, upon *Pauls* Examination, that he would not grant what they desired, read the Chapter throughout. And in *Act. Chap. 26.* you may read his Confession, and the relation or manner of his Conversion before King *Agrippa*; and as he spoke for himself, *Festus* said with a loud Voice, *Paul thou art beside thy self, much Learning doth make thee Mad.* But he said, *I am not Mad, most Noble Festus, but speak for the word of Truth and Soberness, &c.* And King *Agrippa* said, *Thou hast almost persuaded me to be a Christian*, read the Chapter throughout.

Now observe, did not some of those whom you Christians call Heathens shew more Christian-like usage in that Age, then many of the Rulers in England has done in this Age, yet would have the name of Christian Magistrates. But the true real Christians are followers of Christ in the Regeneration; not in the oldness of the Letter, but in the newness of the Spirit, *For the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life, 2 Cor. 3. 6.* And it is not the Name that maketh a Christian, but the Nature, not the 1st Nature, for that is Earthly,

Earthly, Sensual & Devilish; but the 2d Nature, the new Nature regenerated & born again, for Christ Jesus said, *Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God; that which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again, &c.* Joh. 3. 3. to 8.

This persecuting Spirit was always blind, it was blind in the great professing Jews, who pretended a Law, whereby to put Christ to Death in that time; it was blind in the great professing *Presbyterians*, who pretended a Law against us to persecute us thereby, (but the Lord had no hand in those Laws, further then permission) and it is well if the Rulers in this Age proceed not to Blood, against a Harmless and Innocent People, for Professing Christ Jesus and Worshipping him, in the way of his Spirit, who was sent from the Bosome of his Father, *Not to destroy mens lives, but to save them*, Luk. 9. 56.

And doth not Englands Rulers pretend a Law now, (and is it not contrary to Christs Law) not only for spoiling of Goods, but also casting into Prison, by which many have suffered to Death, which comes near to Blood, and is not this a mark of Satan the Destroyer, *Rev. 2. 10.* for Christ Jesus nor his Servants never cast any into Prison. Let the Spirit and Scriptures of Truth be judge in those things, for to them I shall appeal, and methinks these times answer much, and run parallel with the Apostles times, in matter of Persecution; and it is the desire of my heart (if it were the will of God) that the Understandings of Englands Rulers might come to be opened with Divine Wisdom, that thereby they might come to see and discern betwixt those that serve God acceptably, and those that serve him not, and so put a difference betwixt the Precious and the Vile; for is not Antiehrists Kingdom of Sin and Unrighteousness grown to a great height? and doth not Wickedness abound? and is not Christs Kingdom of Righteousness too too little regarded; so that he that departs from Evil is become a Prey? and thus the Lord sees, and in his own time will put an end to Sin, and finish Transgression, and bring in Everlasting Righteousness, and this will be the joy of the Upright in Heart, whose Confidence is in the Lord alone. And I say again, the true Worship of Christ is Spiritual; which he set up above 1600 Years since, (and never changed it) read John 4. from 20. to 25. And where two or three, many or few, meet together, and worship together in the Spiritual Worship; there is Christ in the midst of them; and no other Worship will the Righteous God accept of, but that which is performed in Spirit and Truth; all other Worship in his sight will be found Idolatry. *For God that made the World, and all things therein, dwells not in Temples made with Hands*, read Act 7. 48, 49, 50. And Christ said, *I in you, and you in me, so the Spirit of God is not to be limited in time or place; and to day, if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts, &c.* This is not to hear the voice of a Mortal Man, but the voice of the Immortal God within all are to hear; this is the true Everlasting Prophet, which Moses the Man of God spoke of, and he that will not hear this Prophet Christ Jesus, and receive his Teaching shall be cut off, &c. the Apostle saith, because they do not receive him.

him and his Spiritual Teachings, But to as many as receive him, to them power to become the Sons of God. born again of the Immortal word of Life, lives and abides forever; but this was a mystery to old Nicodemus in his day, and it is a mystery to all Natural Carnal Wisdom at this time; For the Man by all his Wisdom, receives not the things of the Spirit of God, *because they are Spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. 2. 11, 14. Here is living and a dying Man; yea, dead as to the World, and the Vanities and Rudiments of it, yet living unto God, by Jesus Christ, who is my Life and the Light of my Days; who am a lover of the Souls of all People; one who is, and is called a Traveller towards the Heavenly and Spiritual *Canaan*, who by Christ is redeemed and brought out of the Broad way, which leads to Destruction, into the narrow way which leads to Life, and out of the Worlds Customs, and passions away, into the Saints practice, which will never decay; and from the Covetous Hirelings and Worlds Teachers, to the teachings of Christ in Spirit and Truth, and for these Mercys my Soul shall Bless and Praise the Lord and that for evermore.

Writ in the 8th month, in the Year of Christ, 1684.

And in the 80th Year of my Age

T. Atkinson.

POSTSCRIPT.

Edward Wilkin, who art a Justice of Peace, within Westmorland; neither thou, nor thy Informers, (as thou stile them,) have proved Friends Meetings, (whom thou in former times) to be Seditious Conventicles, or any way tending to the breach of the Peace of the Kingdom. But on the contrary they are quiet and peaceable; and send to Peace, in the God of Peace, whom they meet, to serve and worship him in Spirit and Truth, as he requires of them. And thou art charged, 21, 22, 23, 24. So that all, that thou and thy Informers has done against a harmless People, the Envy of your Hearts against the Lord, his Truth and People, in spoiling their souls, and casting them into Prison: Is it not a Work of Satan the Devil, Rev. 2. and 10. Who is the Lord's Destroyer, Rev. 4. 11. There read your selves, and consider if you are not comprehended in the Light of Jesus.

And therefore, now a warning to you (from the Lord of Life and Glory; who will reward according to your deeds:) Cease from your unrighteous and unchristian like Actions, and your performance before the Door of Mercy be shut against you; for an Account you must give to the just Judge of Heaven and Earth. These are true, and living Words, from a true Man, who is in the World and the vanities thereof: But living unto God by Jesus Christ, who is my Life and the Light of my Days.

Tho. Atkinson.

THE END.

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